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Increase in Number of Deputy Chairmen of Council of Ministers

1. Source interprets the 1 March appointment of three new First Deputy Chairmen and four additional Deputy Chairmen of the Council of Ministers as a revival of the war-time State Committee of Defense, which was in complete charge of war policy and operations, with the exception of logistical support, which was handled by the Ministry of Defense together with administrative matters. After the war, this committee was dissolved and responsibility for policy and operations was returned to the Ministry of Defense.

Changes in the Ministry of Defense

2. Source believes that the West should not link the replacement of Bulganin by Zhukov as Minister of Defense with the Malenkov ouster. He believes that this change was based on a desire to put the army back on a military basis. During the war, political commissars had been removed from the army, causing a drift away from the Party. Bulganin was, therefore, brought in after the war to reinstate political discipline in army ranks. Now that this task has been accomplished, it is time for a real military man to be in charge.

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Although a popular and strong figure in the army and a true military man, Zhukov has worked closely with the Party and is a thorough Communist. Source believes that the new emphasis on heavy industry means new emphasis on defense.

Reaction of Soviet Peoples to Changes

3. The West takes changes such as the recent shifts of top-level Soviet personalities much more seriously and reads more significance into such changes than do the peoples of the Soviet Union. The average Soviet citizen takes an interest in such changes and discusses them but is cynical. He applauds when anyone falls.

Reaction of Party Apparatus and Bureaucrats

4. Among the Party apparatus and bureaucrats, source believes that changes such as those of 9 February definitely cause chaos and alarm. Undoubtedly replacements are already being made. Source considers it especially significant that Malenkov was given a government rather than a Party job. Since source believes that Malenkov is, on the way out, he predicts that all subordinate level personnel in the ministries who got their jobs through Malenkov will probably be removed.² Ponomarenko, Suslov, and the entire Central Committee apparatus are now Khrushchev men, source affirms. Khrushchev is clearly the head of state but did not become Premier because he does not need that position to retain his power and because he is not inclined to run things in the one-man-show style of Stalin. On the contrary, he will probably always act in the name of the Central Committee of the CPSU. 50X1

1. [] Comment: When asked to elaborate on this theory, source could give no particular reasons for this conjecture. He merely stated that there was no other way to interpret such an expansion at the top level. 50X1

2. [] for source's comments on Pervukhin and Saburov before and after the announcement of 1 March.

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